

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1158  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5624

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, GR  
SUBJ: CONSTANTINE MITSOTAKIS: OPENS UP ON CRETE

REF: ATHENS 4637

1. CONSTANTINE MITSOTAKIS HAS NOW TAKEN HIS CAMPAIGN TO CRETE, ANOTHER STEP IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A WELL THOUGHT OUT AND DEFINITELY WELL-FINANCED CAMPAIGN. HIS JUNE 11 SPEECH IN IRAKLION TO AN ESTIMATED 8,000-10,000 PEOPLE, WAS A POLEMIC ATTACK ON GEORGE MAVROS' LEADERSHIP OF THE UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER AND ON ANDREAS PAPANDREOU'S STEWARDSHIP OF PASOK. MITSOTAKIS PROPOSED THAT MAVROS

CALL A CONFERENCE OF CENTER UNION CANDIDATES WHO RAN IN THE 1974 AND 1964 ELECTIONS TO SELECT THE LEADERSHIP OF A RECONSTITUTED CENTER WHICH, HOWEVER, WOULD EXCLUDE PAPANDREOU AND PASOK BECAUSE OF IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. HE AGAIN THREATENED THAT IF HIS CALL WAS NOT HEEDED HE WOULD MOVE TO FORM HIS OWN POLITICAL PARTY.

2. OF INTEREST, TOO, WAS MITSOTAKIS ASSERTION THAT GREECE /BELONGS TO THE WEST" AND THAT ITS INTERESTS "DEMAND" THAT IT LOCATE ITSELF  
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THERE. MOREOVER, HE SAID NATO HAD PROVIDED VITAL SECURITY TO GREECE IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, GREECE HAS "JUSTIFIABLE" COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE ALLIANCE SO THAT IT COULD ONLY RETURN TO ITS MILITARY WING WHEN "CERTAIN CONDITIONS" ARE FULFILLED, ECHOING CARAMANLIS' POSITION THAT THE CYPRUS QUESTION MUST BE RESOLVED FIRST. (IN CONTRAST TO MITSOTAKIS' IMPLICATION THAT GREECE SHOULD RETURN TO NATO'S MILITARY SIDE WHEN THE CYPRUS ISSUE IS RESOLVED,

SHOULD NOT DO SO EVEN IF THE CYPRUS ISSUE IS RESOLVED AND THAT GREECE'S RETURN IS PART OF THE BROADER PROBLEM OF EUROPEAN SECURITY GENERALLY.) MITSOTAKIS ALSO EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EC "TO HELP ITS EXTERNAL SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY."

3. MITSOTAKIS WAS RESTRAINED ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS, PLEDGING HIMSELF TO TRY AND REVIVE THE ERA OF GOOD FEELING AND COOPERATION THAT ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS AND KEMAL ATATURK INAUGURATED IN 1928. AT THE SAME TIME HE ASSERTED THERE ARE BOUNDS BEYOND WHICH TURKISH "PROVOCATIONS" ARE UNACCEPTABLE.

4. COMMENT: MITSOTAKIS' FOREIGN POLICY STANCE IS ESPECIALLY INTERESTING. HERE IS A MAN TRYING TO MAKE HIS WAY BACK INTO GREEK POLITICS WHO REFUSES TO WAVE A BLOODY SHIRT AT THE TURKS AND WHO TAKES WHAT, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IS A VERY FORTHCOMING POSTURE ON NATO AND FINALLY ON THE UNITED STATES (IN GREECE "WEST" IS A CODE WORD FOR THE UNITED STATES). MOREOVER, HE HAS DONE THIS ON AN ISLAND WHICH IS KNOWN FOR ITS STRONG ANTIPATHY TO THE TURKS AND WHERE THE PRESENCE OF US AND NATO FACILITIES HAVE MADE GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AN ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE. HE SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN ON CRETE A MODERATE POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY AND A CAREFULLY DRAWN FORTHCOMING POSITION ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS MAKES GOOD POLITICAL SENSE--AT LEAST BETTER SENSE THAN THE UNREMITTING HOSTILITY OF PASOK AND THE COOLNESS OF THE UDC ON THE ISSUES.

5. THE NEW ELECTION LAW (SEPTEL)--WHICH ADOPTS THE PLUS-ONE SYSTEM --MAKES IT VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT MITSOTAKIS WILL BE ELECTED AS DEPUTY FROM HANIA, CRETE, IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS--ALL HE HAS TO DO  
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IS TO HOLD ON TO THE VOTES HE GOT IN THE LAST ELECTION, AND BY ALL ACCOUNTS HE SHOULD DO CONSIDERABLY BETTER. MEANWHILE, MITSOTAKIS HAS TOLD US HE WILL CONTINUE TO SPEAK UP PUBLICLY MORE AND MORE. HE IS PLANNING HIS NEXT MAJOR SPEECH FOR THESSALONIKI IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. THUS FAR, IN TALKING TO US, OUR UDC CONTACTS STILL SEEM TO DISCOUNT MITSOTAKIS AS AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL THREAT TO THEM OR THEIR PARTY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE FOUR UDC DEPUTIES FROM IRAKLION SEEMED CONCERNED ENOUGH OVER MITSOTAKIS' APPEARANCE THERE LAST WEEK THAT THEY ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT ON THE EVE OF HIS SPEECH ATTACKING HIM FOR HIS 1965 "APOSTASY" AND BLAMING HIS ACTIONS THEN FOR LEADING TO THE 1967 MILITARY TAKEOVER. NEW DEMOCRACY DEPUTY MANOLIS KEFALOYANNIS, THE PREEMINENT POLITICIAN ON CRETE, IS CONVINCED THAT MITSOTAKIS WILL RUN WELL ON THE ISLAND, THAT HE AND CANDIDATES WHO SUPPORT HIM WILL EAT IMPORTANTLY INTO THE UDC VOTE THERE, AND THAT, IN ANY CASE, THE UDC, LIKE PASOK, IS IN DISMAL SHAPE ON CRETE. IF KEFALOYANNIS IS CORRECT, AND IF HIS ANALYSIS BECOMES ACCEPTED BY IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THE UDC, THE PARTY SHOULD

START TO TAKE MITSOTAKIS FAR MORE SERIOUSLY THAN IT HAS SO FAR, FOR THE PARTY CAN ILL-AFFORD TO SUFFER IMPORTANT LOSSES IN CRETE, ITS MOST IMPORTANT ELECTORAL BASE, IF IT WANTS TO ASSURE ITS POSITION AS THE SECOND LARGEST PARTY IN GREECE, AND, WITH THAT, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OPPOSITION. DESPITE ALL THIS, HOWEVER, SO FAR WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT MITSOTAKIS' RECENT ACTIVITIES HAVE HAD A RESPONSE BEYOND CRETE. PERHAPS HIS FORTHCOMING APPEARANCE IN THESSALONIKI WILL GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF HIS PROSPECTS NATIONALLY.  
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